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ABSTRACT

Data from site visits, interviews and a survey of twelve high schools and one tech center in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) were analyzed in order to evaluate the processes that are used for course and career planning. It was found that most students and parents have some knowledge of a general course planning form (called an educational development plan or EDP); but the plan itself, career development activities, and career and technical education were not of great interest to them or the teaching staff. Additional findings included these: (1) over 80% of the students planned to attend college immediately after high school and that was their major focus in terms of completing the EDP; (2) career pathways were of little interest to most of the counselors who believed that the status quo processes were adequate for course selection; (3) 60-70% of students had given serious thought to potential careers; (4) there was little collaboration between the schools; and (5) typically career activities and EDPs were completed in 8th or 9th grade considered too early in the high school career. (Eight tables are included. Appended are forms for site visit interviews, focus group interviews, the survey, and a permission letter). (AJ)

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Use and Effectiveness of Formal Course and Career Planning Forms in Secondary Schools in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Final Report

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September 2000

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Allendale High School	Rochelle Walters
Grand Haven High School	Anne Runschke
Hamilton High School	Treecy Meier
Holland High School	Tom Langejans
Holland Christian High School	Deb Bandstra
Hudsonville High School	Darlene Hoving
Jenison High School	Ted TerHaar
Saugatuck High School	Tom Clark
Spring Lake High School	Gwen Brink/Brian Sabo
Unity Christian High School	Bruce Hulst
West Ottawa High School	Sue Maciak
Zeeland High School	Dan Penney/Jim Sheehan

Three data collection efforts were undertaken as part of the study. We conducted site visits at all 12 high schools plus Careerline Tech Center. All of the staff and students who were interviewed were very cooperative and forthcoming with information and opinions. We thank them for their time and efforts. We conducted a sample survey of students and their parents/guardians. Again, we very much appreciate the time and effort that the respondents to these surveys spent. The success of the study is very much attributable to their diligence. The third data collection effort was a brief survey

that curriculum directors in the 12 school districts completed via the Internet. We appreciate their time and effort as well.

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Prologue

Katie wanted to be a veterinarian. At her IEP meeting with her parents present, we discussed the classes she would have to take in high school and in college and beyond to become a vet, we examined her transcript, and we had results from aptitude and career interest assessments. Together, we decided that a veterinarian technician was a more reasonable goal for her, and we constructed a plan with that goal in mind. (Ottawa County high school counselor)

I personally don't put too much emphasis on career planning when I'm counseling students. They're going to change their minds 5 or 6 times after they get to college. I did . . . didn't you? (Ottawa County high school counselor)

Wouldn't it be great if we could give the same attention to every child in general education that we do to students in special education–sit in a meeting that includes teachers and parents who know the student well and who want what's best for the student with lots of data about the student–and make an individual educational plan? (Ottawa County high school principal)

The majority of my students are not serious about their education. I have had students ask me if they really had to get their hands dirty because they were worried about their nails. (Careerline Tech Center teacher)

Use and Effectiveness of Formal Course and Career Planning Forms in Secondary Schools in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Secondary education and comprehensive high schools are experiencing considerable change. Not too many years ago, the traditional high school had three curricula–college prep, general, and vocational. School districts established a minimum number of credits necessary to graduate with a required distribution of credits across academic and non-academic subjects (i.e., physical education), and students selected classes with the help of parents and guidance counselors. Class lists were produced by hand, and not a great deal of switching into and out of classes occurred. College entrance requirements were generally factored into the course selection process for students who were planning to go on to a 4-year institution, who generally pursued the college prep curriculum. Students not planning to go on to college were generally directed into the vocational track if they had an interest (or if a guidance counselor thought that they should have an interest) in an applied field such as auto mechanics, construction trades, or agriculture or into the general track.

What has changed? First, a much higher proportion of graduates attend postsecondary institutions. Nationally, almost two-thirds of graduates go on to some form of postsecondary education or training, and in the Ottawa Area ISD, the fraction is higher. Second, a significant emphasis on career development in schools has arisen. Programs and initiatives such as Tech Prep, School to Work, and the Michigan Career Preparation System have successfully introduced the notion that career awareness and exploration are desirable functions of the high school curriculum. Third, the general curriculum has been discredited. Studies have shown that learning outcomes and labor market outcomes from the general curriculum were extremely poor, and many states have removed the general curriculum all together.

Fourth, cognitive psychologists and other educational researchers have made considerable progress in identifying different learning styles. We now understand about multiple forms of intelligence, and the importance of applied learning styles. As many as 60 percent of learners do better with hands-on instruction rather than traditional didactic approaches. Fifth, computers have become pervasive in high schools; readily accessible to students at school and at home. Technology has changed instruction and curriculum, but more dramatically, access to the Internet has spawned a whole new approach to student learning where each individual has immediate access to virtually all knowledge. Sixth, education has entered a world of consumer choice. Students and parents can choose public/non-public districts. If they choose public districts, they can generally choose which school building they want to attend and, often times, can choose which teachers they want.

In addition to the changes noted, there has been a tremendous growth in the enrollment of students in special education. Furthermore, within special education, there has been a definite movement toward holding schools accountable for student learning and for ensuring that students are educated within the least restrictive environment. Individualized education plans (IEPs) govern virtually all special education instruction—in which parents, administrators, and teachers confer about the appropriate curriculum and pathway for all students designated as special education students.

The changes that have occurred and the growth in special education enrollment have significant implications for curriculum offerings and course selection for students in secondary schools. The pervasiveness of postsecondary (lifelong) learning suggests that secondary schools need to prepare all graduates to be able to succeed in additional education and training. The introduction of career development for all students implies that districts must fit these sorts of topics into the curriculum. By the time they leave school, today's high school graduates should have

thought about how their high school subjects relate to future education/training and into a broad career path.

An approach that many school districts are taking is *career pathways*. This approach has students select from a small number (around 5-6) of very broad career options, and then organizes the curriculum in a way that supports the careers. Early in a student's secondary schooling, they will opt into a pathway and will be given information on courses that support that career.

School building accreditation has also changed. It has gone from a traditional emphasis on ensuring that resources and inputs meet specific standards to an emphasis on building-level outcomes, and most recently, to an approach that focuses on preparing students for transitions.

Purpose

An important element to help students traverse the changing high school curriculum effectively is educational development plans (EDP's).[1] This study takes an intensive look at the processes that are used for course and career planning in the high schools of districts comprising the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD).

The following 12 high schools participated in the study: Allendale, Grand Haven, Hamilton, Holland, Holland Christian, Hudsonville, Jenison, Saugatuck, Spring Lake, Unity Christian, West Ottawa, and Zeeland. The questions that the study addresses are as follows:

- What is the stated purpose/focus of the high school's course planning form? Who are the "users" of the information?
- When are students introduced to the course planning form and when is it completed? Who fills out the form?

[1]Also referred to as employability/education development plans (E/EDP's). It might be argued that EDP's are more important than career pathways. Getting students to be more planful in their coursetaking behavior can be accomplished without the pathways structure.

- What information does the form collect?
- What sources of information do students/parents use to complete the form?
- What are the roles of counselors, teachers, parents, and students in the process of completing the forms?
- How often and how are the forms updated/changed?
- To what extent are the course planning forms automated? If not, do high schools have plans to automate them?
- To what extent are EDP's and individual education and transitions plans (for special education students) integrated?

In addition to the benchmarking study of EDP's, the OAISD is interested in understanding whether, and if so, how, the districts are integrating career and technical education, Tech Prep, Career Preparation, Comprehensive Guidance, career assessments, career pathways, EDP's, and North Central Accreditation (NCA) transitions accreditation efforts.

The remainder of the report is organized as follows. The next section describes and documents the study methods. Section 3 presents the results and findings from site visits to the 12 participating high schools. Section 4 presents the findings from a sample survey of students and parents/guardians. Section 5 discusses an informal collection of information from curriculum directors in the 12 participating school districts. The final section concludes and offers several suggestions for OAISD consideration.

2. Study Methods

The study's main questions have been addressed through sample surveys and site visits to area high schools. The site visits included focus groups with students and interviews with counselors and

teaching staff. The surveys were completed by a randomly selected sample of students from each high school (students in each grade level), and their parents/guardians. Finally, we have interviewed curriculum directors, staff from OAISD, and we conducted a site visit to Careerline Tech Center.

Site visits. During April and May 2000, project staff conducted site visits at all 12 of the participating high schools plus Careerline Tech Center. Each site visit lasted about one-half day and involved two focus groups with students, a group interview with the school's guidance counselors, and a group interview with instructors of career development units/courses. The focus groups with students involved five or six students from grades 9/10 and from grades 11/12. We used a semi-structured interviewing technique for the focus groups, counselors, and teaching staff. This means that we developed a structured form (attached to this report as Appendix 1) for each group so that all individuals at all sites would be asked the same questions, but at the sites, we were flexible enough in conducting our questioning that we would pursue any topics that came up that were unique to the site. We did not limit our data collection to the information requested in the structured interview form. In addition to the interviews, we requested forms and handbooks from all of the sites.

The high schools were all very accommodating in helping us to arrange the visits and in making students and staff available to us. A liaison at each site selected the students and staff based on our instructions. We wanted to get a general cross-section of the students, but we also wanted to have students who were verbal and would not be intimidated by the focus group process. After talking to the students about their interests and aspirations, it seemed clear that we succeeded in obtaining a diverse cross-section. Furthermore, we felt comfortable that all respondents provided forthright and accurate information.

Surveys of students and parents. The second component of data collection that we undertook for this study was a sample survey of students and parents. The survey design called for a written survey to be completed by a random sample of students and parents. The questionnaire for the students would be administered during school hours in a group session at the students' schools similar to a standardized test. The questionnaire for the parents would be sent through the mail.

The legalities of protecting student identities and the logistics of administering the surveys turned out to make the survey process quite challenging and, in the end, the response rates were disappointing. Each of the participating high schools identified a liaison to help us administer the surveys. Schools cannot provide student names and contact information to outside parties without parental permission, so we asked the liaisons to send a permission letter to a random sample of parents explaining that we wanted to have their students complete a survey during school and to have them complete a survey through the mail. We asked the liaisons to draw a random sample of 15 percent of the students.[2] The permission letter included a response form that parents sent to us. We then forwarded the names of the students to the school liaisons, and asked the liaisons to administer the student surveys, and we administered the parent survey through the mail. The surveys and permission letter comprise Appendix 2.

Table 1 shows the response rates that we received for the student and parent surveys. The major loss in response came from the initial mailing. School districts sampled over 2,000 students, and a letter was sent to the parents/guardians of all of these students. Just under 300 families agreed to participate—14.4 percent response rate. The table shows that the response rates ranged from 9 to 26 percent across the districts. This response rate was much lower than anticipated, although it

[2]For ease of administration, we allowed the school liaisons to take every 6th student from an enrollment list, so our effective sample was closer to 16.7 percent.

Table 1
Sample Sizes and Response Rates, by District

School District	Sample size	Permission forms received		Number of student responses		Number of parent responses*	
		Number	Percent of forms received	Number	Percent of forms received	Number	Percent of forms received
Allendale	70	18	25.7	17	94.4	--	--
Grand Haven	311	32	10.3	29	90.6	--	--
Hamilton	97	18	18.6	15	83.3	--	--
Holland	210	40	19.0	35	87.5	--	--
Holland Christian	150	14	9.3	11	78.6	--	--
Hudsonville	200	20	10.0	16	80.0	--	--
Jenison	248	34	13.7	24	70.6	--	--
Saugatuck	40	6	15.0	0	0.0	--	--
Spring Lake	105	14	13.3	12	85.7	--	--
Unity Christian	122	18	14.8	12	66.7	--	--
West Ottawa	263	50	19.0	23	46.0	--	--
Zeeland	223	30	13.5	15	50.0	--	--
TOTAL	2,039	294	14.4	209	71.1	166	56.5

*Due to confidentiality protections in survey administration, district could not be identified.

was average for a mail survey. Part of the problem was the timing of the mailing and its requested deadline. It turns out that in some districts the mailing went out close to Spring break, and the requested deadline was immediately after Spring break. Part of the problem was also in the administration of the mailing at the local school level. Of the parents/students who indicated that they would participate, we received 71 percent of the students and 56 percent of the parents.

Curriculum directors survey. The last data collection effort was a brief telephone survey of each district's curriculum director. The main purpose of this survey was to find out if career pathways or other major career development initiatives had been or were planned to be built into the districts' curriculum. The survey took place after school had ended for the year in June 2000. Of the

12 curriculum directors, we received responses from seven. Section 5 lists the precise survey questions.

3. The Perspectives of Students and Staff Gathered through Site Visits

Site visits occurred between April 18, 2000 and May 16, 2000 at the 12 participating high schools and at the Careerline Tech Center. At each high school, we held a focus group with 9th and 10th grade students, a focus group with 11th and 12th grade students, a group or personal interview with the high school guidance counselor(s), and a group or personal interview with teaching staff who were responsible for a unit or course on careers. As might be expected, considerable variation in each district's course sign-up and career development practices was observed. However, we also observed a number of similarities across the districts. This section of the report will attempt to summarize the contrasts and similarities.

Virtually all of the districts had students complete a high school course-taking plan that spanned at least four years (one district had a six-year plan to encompass postsecondary plans as well). These were generally completed in 8th or 9th grade. However, the way districts used these plans was quite varied. In some districts, the plan was filed and seemingly never revisited. In other districts, the plan was updated annually and used as a resource in the course registration process. The staff in many of the districts referred to the plan as an EDP, although students often were unfamiliar with that term, and did not recognize the form when it was shown to them. Other districts referred to it as an activity form or didn't have a name for it at all. All in all, it is fair to say that the main purpose of the plan in virtually all of the districts was to make sure that students met graduation requirements and distributional requirements across subjects.

The course registration procedures were quite similar at all of the high schools. Shortly into the second semester of the year, counselors or registrars distributed registrations forms to students, who typically had one to two weeks to complete them and turn them in. In most high schools, the forms were distributed by counselors to students in a required class such as English. At the time that they are distributed, the students are given handbooks with course descriptions and are given reminders about graduation requirements, college entrance standards, and special classes or opportunities. In some districts, teacher signatures were required to sign up for some classes, and districts varied with respect to whether parental/guardian signatures were required.

Districts differed with respect to how counselors made themselves available to students during the registration process. It was clear that in all districts, counselors made themselves available to students who had questions/concerns and virtually all students felt like they could get access to counselors if desired. (Only one or two students indicated that access to counselors had been a problem for them, but this was out of over 100 students who participated in the focus groups.) However, in some districts, counselors made an effort to meet with all students on a one-on-one basis. They were able to accomplish this in some high schools, but in at least one of the high schools, the counselors' caseloads precluded it, so the counselors opted to meet with all members of the Senior class.

Perhaps of more interest to this study was the variation across districts with respect to how much emphasis they place on careers at the time of course registration, and even within a district, there is variation across grade levels. In some districts, Hudsonville is a prime example, counselors spend several days in classes presenting information to students relevant to their course selection decisions. The counselors indicated to us that a primary focus of these presentations was about

careers. In Allendale, sophomores have an English unit on careers, and the class registration process is co-ordinated to occur right after students have researched careers through MOIS. We encountered counselors in other districts who were rather disdainful about even presenting career information to students because they felt students lacked the maturity to be making career decisions or because they felt that students would ultimately change their interests so many times. In these districts, the course registration process involved very little, if any, career information.

In our focus groups, we asked students to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how much influence each of the following information sources had on their course selection decisionmaking: parents' or other family members' opinions, guidance counselor advice, friends' opinions, what colleges want, teachers' opinions, high school handbook/course descriptions, or career plans. Interestingly, the results from every single focus group of students–24 in all–had career plans and what colleges want ranked 1st or 2nd, respectively.[3] Most of the groups had guidance counselor advice and parents' or other family members' opinions ranked just behind the other two responses, and most groups ranked teacher opinions and friends' opinions very low. The ratings for handbooks/course descriptions had the most variation; some students thought they were very useful, and others thought they were useless. In general, 9th and 10th grades tended to use the handbooks, whereas 11th and 12th graders felt they did not provide enough information or they were inaccurate.

Most of the students felt very comfortable with the procedures that were used in their school for deciding on and registering for classes. This was clearly not a big issue to them. They indicated that they typically obtained enough information to make good choices for themselves (actually most

[3]We asked the students to give us specific examples of times when they signed up for a course or didn't sign up for a course because of information that they received from each of these sources. Consistently, we heard that students had signed up for foreign language courses and for Advanced Placement courses because they believed college entrance required them (for foreign language) or because they would be useful for college (AP).

9th and 10th graders felt that the graduation requirements and course offerings left them with very few choices), and that it was relatively easy to change classes or sections when problems arose. We asked the students and counselors whether they felt on-line registration would be an improvement. The majority of individuals were negative toward this idea because they felt that it would diminish the amount of one-on-one meetings that are undertaken between students and counselors or between parents and counselors. A few individuals thought it would be an excellent idea.

Most of the students indicated that they had spent some time in middle school or high school in career development activities. Many had participated in job shadowing activities in middle school, and most had either been shown how to access career information on the Internet or had been required to do so for a class. Many indicated that they had taken the ACT PLAN test, COPS and CAPS, or other career assessment or interest inventory.

Career development activities or instructional units seem to be a "hit or miss" thing in high schools. Most students recalled such activities in middle school, but at the high school level, most of the teaching staff that we interviewed had a unit or class that covered career development that was an elective or was offered to only selected sections of a required course. At Zeeland High School, an elective class called Career Awareness Program, was offered to about 25 students per semester, for example. Grand Haven had job search and self-assessment activities in Marketing class and in one teacher's sections of Junior English. Other districts had career units that were required of all students. Finally, some districts had no career-related instructional units.

We found that the majority of students had career aspirations that appeared to have been well thought out. We did not explore the extent to which these career aspirations had been influenced by career development activities in school, so we cannot correlate career development activities with

particular career aspirations. However, we were struck by how many students could articulate reasons for rather specific career choices. Several teachers suggested that around half to two-thirds of students had serious well-founded careers in mind, and we would certainly concur with that assessment based on conversations with students.

Some of the counselors, particularly at larger high schools, were generally aware of career pathways, but its implementation did not appear to be imminent in any district. The majority of counselors were not aware of career pathways.

Part of the purpose of this study was to see if procedures in place for special education students were integrated into or impacted the procedures for course selection and registration for general education. We did not interview special education staff per se, but we did discuss the subject with the guidance counselors. All interviewees indicated that most special education students follow exactly the same procedures for registering for classes as all other students, so special education students would receive career guidance to the same extent that all other students do. Of course, in addition, special education students would participate in an annual IEP conference that typically explored career ambitions and prospects. Other than the comment made by a principal that is in the prologue of this report, we received no indication of any movement toward adopting an IEP-like process for all students.

We asked students and staff members about interaction with and perceptions about Careerline Tech Center (CTC). We often heard the traditional stigmatic perception of "vocational education being for non-college bound students." Interestingly, the students we interviewed who did attend CTC were quite pleased with their programs, and one even carried on at length about the college credits she was receiving. But when queried about why they had chosen not to attend, non-CTC

students listed reasons such as, "not for college prep," "too much time–couldn't fit in my schedule," "don't want to leave my home school and friends," "guidance counselors discouraged it for me," and "none of the course offerings interested me."

Suggestions and recommendations. Besides trying to get a snapshot of how course planning and selection occurred, and how they were tied to career development, we also asked all focus group participants and interviewees for suggestions about how processes might be improved. We list those suggestions here.

- Convene a group of teaching staff to develop suggestions of how career development topics could be integrated into lesson plans or course units in core subjects (especially language arts and social studies) in middle and high schools–should be coordinated at county level.
- More attention should be paid to career development for students who are unlikely to attend 4-year colleges. Teachers need to be made more aware of career options for these students.
- More opportunities for job shadowing are needed; make job shadowing compulsory.
- All students need to develop a portfolio throughout high school; revive the portfolio idea.
- Re-institute the DAT for all 9th graders.
- Have high school counselors spend more time orienting and helping 8th graders develop EDPs.
- Make handbook with course descriptions a more flexible document (perhaps an on-line document), so that it can be more up-to-date and easily modified as courses change.
- Make it mandatory for all high students to take a career course.

4. Survey Results

4.1 Students

The analyses of the student data that are discussed in this section relate characteristics of course planning documents and career development activities to four attributes: school district, high school class, sex, and postsecondary plans. Table 2 presents data on the incidence and updating frequency of course planning documents. A little over 80 percent of the students indicated that they had completed a course planning document. This percentage varied across districts from 55 percent at Holland Christian to 100 percent at Grand Haven and Spring Lake. The remaining columns in the table present data about the course planning documents as reported only by those who indicated that they had completed one. The largest share of students indicated that they first completed the course planning document in 8th grade–about two-thirds of those who gave a response to the question. Most of the rest of the students noted that they first completed the form in 9th grade; the majority of respondents from Unity Christian, Hudsonville, and Zeeland indicated that 9th grade was when they first completed a course planning document—all other districts had 8th grade as the largest response.

All together, about 60 to 70 percent of the students indicated that they updated their plan at least annually (or more frequently), and about 20 percent said that they never updated their plan. The latter statistic may be skewed by freshman respondents who have not had the opportunity to update their plan. Indeed about one-third of freshman said they never update their plan as compared to only three percent of seniors. About three-quarters of the students indicated that they had reviewed/updated their course planning document during this (1999/2000) school year. This statistic is downwardly skewed by seniors, of whom only about half said that they had reviewed or updated their document (since seniors do not go through the class registration process).

Table 2. Incidence and Timing of Course Planning Documents

	(A) Ever completed a course planning document?			(B) When completed 1st time?					(C) How often updated?				(D) Reviewed/updated this year?		(E) Called an EDP?			(F)
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Before 8th	8th	9th	After 9th	Don't remember	At least once per year	Exactly once per year	As needed	Never	Yes	No	Yes	No	Don't know	Percent of Sample
TOTAL SAMPLE	82%	7	11	3%	61	24	6	6	13%	56	4	21	74%	26	27%	21	52	100%
District																		
Allendale	65%	24	12	0%	64	27	0	9	0%	64	0	36	71%	29	36%	18	45	8%
Grand Haven	100%	0	0	0%	62	24	3	10	31%	41	0	28	81%	19	25%	0	75	14
Hamilton	87%	13	0	0%	77	8	15	0	8%	77	0	15	45%	55	31%	38	31	7
Holland Christian	55%	36	9	0%	50	0	33	16	0%	50	0	50	100%	0	0%	0	100	5
Holland	77%	9	13	8%	76	16	0	0	11%	59	11	19	73%	27	33%	26	41	17
Hudsonville	81%	6	13	0%	15	54	8	23	15%	62	7	15	73%	27	31%	7	62	8
Jenison	79%	13	8	6%	61	33	0	0	11%	56	6	28	92%	8	32%	11	58	11
Spring Lake	100%	0	0	8%	92	0	0	0	0%	100	0	0	67%	33	8%	75	17	6
Unity Christian	92%	0	8	0%	18	64	18	0	27%	55	9	9	80%	20	27%	36	36	6
West Ottawa	91%	4	4	5%	85	5	0	5	15%	55	0	30	71%	29	5%	25	70	11
Zeeland	67%	7	27	0%	20	50	20	10	10%	60	20	10	78%	22	70%	0	30	7
Class																		
Freshman	80%	8	12	4%	73	18	3	1	15%	49	4	32	80%	20	27%	22	51	41%
Sophomore	89%	6	6	2%	45	36	6	11	19%	57	4	19	79%	21	36%	19	45	26
Junior	82%	4	14	4%	48	30	4	13	0%	70	9	22	89%	11	22%	13	65	14
Senior	78%	8	15	0%	66	17	14	3	17%	77	3	3	48%	52	20%	27	53	19
Sex																		
Female	81%	5	14	3%	57	27	6	8	13%	59	4	23	74%	26	26%	22	52	55%
Male	84%	9	8	3%	67	20	7	4	14%	60	5	21	74%	26	28%	20	53	45
Postsecondary Plans																		
Yes, after H.S.	86%	5	10	3%	62	24	6	6	14%	61	4	21	71%	29	26%	21	53	81%
Yes, after working	70%	10	20	7%	50	29	7	7	21%	43	0	36	100%	0	29%	29	43	10
No	54%	31	15	0%	33	50	17	0	14%	43	29	14	67%	33	43%	0	57	6
Don't know	86%	0	14	0%	67	17	0	17	17%	67	0	17	100%	0	40%	0	60	3

Note: Table entries in (A) through (E) are row percentages of the sample who answered the item. For (A), the entire sample answered the item, n=209. For (B) through (E), only individuals who responded "Yes" to item (A) answered the items. Row percentages many not add up to 100 because of rounding. Column (F) are column percentages of the full sample. Again, they may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Tabulations from survey of students.

When asked whether they called their course planning document an EDP, about one-half of the students said that they didn't know, a little over a quarter said yes, and a little under a quarter said no. Students from Zeeland were most likely to respond affirmatively, although it is a small sample of students so it may not be representative of the student body in that school.

The responses to these items did not differ greatly by high school class. The freshman were most likely to report that they had completed a course planning document for the first time in 8th grade (older students may not have recalled accurately), and seniors were less likely to have updated their course planning form this year. Other than those differences, the responses from the four classes are quite similar. The responses did not differ significantly for any of the items between males and females.

Over 80 percent of the student respondents indicated that they were planning to attend some postsecondary education immediately after high school, and another 10 percent indicated that they planned to attend eventually, after working. Because the preponderance of the respondents fell into the first category, it is not meaningful to compare statistics across these categories.

Table 3 examines characteristics of the course planning documents. The first columns in the table refer to sources of information used by students to complete their course planning documents. The entries represent the percentages of students who indicated that they had relied on that source of information. (Percentages add up to greater than 100 because students were allowed to indicate multiple sources.) The sources of information that were relied upon the most were counselors, high school handbook, parent or legal guardian advice, and own knowledge. All of these sources were used by just over 60 percent of the students. Friends/acquaintances was the next most frequently

Table 3. Characteristics of Course Planning Documents

	(A) Sources of information used to complete								(B) Signers			(C) Items on Plan				(D) Uses of Plan			
	Brother/ sister	Friends/ Acquaint.	Counselors	Handbook	Parents/ Guardian	School staff	Teachers	Own know.	Parents/ Guardian	Counselors	Teachers	Test scores	College	Career/jobs	College courses	Planning doc	Registration	Source of info	Portfolio
TOTAL SAMPLE	28	43	63	63	62	10	33	61	65	57	30	12	18	52	11	81	40	48	11
District																			
Allendale	9	27	36	45	36	9	18	64	67	25	17	14	12	12	11	91	45	45	0
Grand Haven	14	48	59	62	55	17	45	52	56	50	86	7	16	41	13	79	28	45	17
Hamilton	46	38	62	62	62	0	46	46	36	0	22	18	0	10	0	85	69	54	23
Holland Christian	33	50	50	17	67	0	17	50	100	0	0	0	0	33	0	67	17	50	33
Holland	41	37	52	63	78	4	37	74	26	41	7	12	0	22	4	81	30	48	4
Hudsonville	15	46	92	85	69	15	23	77	45	90	0	22	73	90	33	92	46	77	0
Jenison	37	37	63	47	53	5	21	42	80	67	12	23	29	75	36	74	16	47	21
Spring Lake	25	50	75	100	58	17	42	92	100	100	0	9	50	100	9	100	75	67	0
Unity Christian	18	9	91	45	55	0	9	55	78	86	0	11	0	90	0	82	55	36	9
West Ottawa	29	52	57	71	62	24	43	52	100	56	100	0	8	54	8	71	33	29	14
Zeeland	40	80	80	70	90	0	30	80	63	50	0	14	14	80	20	80	60	50	0
Class																			
Freshman	24	32	51	57	53	12	34	51	68	61	32	14	13	51	10	76	40	37	15
Sophomore	19	42	67	60	54	10	42	65	51	54	21	23	25	58	23	79	33	56	8
Junior	57	74	70	70	78	0	22	78	56	36	33	0	21	39	0	87	52	57	0
Senior	29	45	77	71	84	13	29	65	86	67	35	4	17	52	4	90	42	55	13
Sex																			
Female	30	48	60	64	65	7	24	60	64	52	27	12	23	56	12	83	42	51	11
Male	26	35	66	60	58	13	42	61	65	61	36	13	12	45	12	81	36	44	12
Postsecondary Plans																			
Yes, after H.S.	30	41	62	63	64	10	36	60	64	53	31	10	19	52	12	80	37	47	12
Yes, after working	7	50	71	64	57	0	14	71	60	67	29	12	9	45	0	100	50	57	0
No	43	71	71	43	71	14	29	43	67	75	17	50	33	50	0	86	57	43	14
Don't know	0	17	50	50	33	17	0	67	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	50	67	17

Note: Table entries in (A) through (D) are percentages of students who indicated they had a course planning form, n=171, who checked the item. The percentages may add to greater than 100 because multiple items may have been checked.
Source: Tabulations from survey of students.

used source of information–just over 40 percent of the students. Teachers and siblings were information sources for about 30 percent of the students and school staff (other than counselors or teachers) was used by 10 percent.

There were dramatic variations in sources of information across the districts. For example, the percentage of students who reported using guidance counselors as a source of information ranged from 36 (Allendale) to 92 (Hudsonville). The percentage of students who used parents/guardians as an information source ranged from 36 (Allendale) to 90 (Zeeland). All of the other options had quite large ranges as well.

In comparing high school classes, we find that freshmen used fewer information sources than the other grade levels, and in particular, juniors and seniors used the most sources. Males and females used about the same information sources although females tended to rely on friends/acquaintances more, and males tended to rely on teachers or other school staff more.

The data in table 3 show that about two-thirds of the students indicated that their parents had signed their course planning document, and counselors officially signed over half. Three districts had relatively low percentages of students who reported that their parents signed the document–Holland, Hamilton, and Hudsonville. Another three districts had all of their students indicate that their parents had signed the document–Holland Christian, Spring Lake, and West Ottawa. Note the huge variation across districts in the percentages of students who reported that counselors or teachers signed their course planning documents. The percentages ranged from 0 to 100 for both signees.

Apparently high schools are a little more diligent about parent and counselor signatures for freshmen and seniors, if the data are reported accurately. Both of these classes have much higher percentages than either of the other two classes. It could be the case that freshmen are encouraged

to get parent signatures because it is the first time that they complete their plans, and that seniors are encouraged because of the need to inform parents about whether students have met all of the appropriate graduation requirements.

The survey asked students whether any of the following items were on the course planning document: standardized test scores, college plans, career/job plans, or college course plans. Over half of the students indicated that their career/job plans was on the document, but only around 10 - 20 percent of the students reported that any of the other three items were on the plan. Five districts had a high percentage of their students indicate that career/job plans were on the document: Spring Lake (100 percent), Hudsonville and Unity Christian (90 percent), Zeeland (80), and Jenison (75).

The last characteristic displayed in table 3 is how the course planning document is used. The survey asked students whether they use the document or form for any of the following purposes:

- as a planning document for figuring out courses to be taken
- as an official registration document to sign up for courses
- as a source of information about courses and credit requirements
- as part of a portfolio for employment or college

Not too surprisingly, the preponderance of students indicated that they used the course planning document for planning purposes. Just under half of the students indicated that they use it as an official registration document, and a similar fraction use it as a source of information about courses and credit requirements. A small fraction of students indicated that they use it or intend to use it as part of a portfolio for employment or for college.

Table 4. Career Development Activities

	(A) Classes at CTC (%)	(B) Career class/unit %	(C) Activities in career class (% = yes)							(D) Usefulness scale (mean)
			Job shadowing	Computer search	Tests	Speakers	Resume/ opp. prep.	Interviewing skills	EDP	
TOTAL SAMPLE	10	55	62	56	65	54	57	53	24	6.7
District										
Allendale	0	65	73	73	45	73	45	27	0	7.9
Grand Haven	15	38	40	20	60	40	30	30	30	7.3
Hamilton	21	87	85	38	77	85	62	69	38	6.3
Holland Christian	9	37	75	25	50	25	50	25	0	5.5
Holland	6	32	45	36	55	45	27	18	18	6.0
Hudsonville	13	88	93	100	86	86	93	86	21	6.5
Jenison	21	50	58	42	33	50	50	58	25	6.8
Spring Lake	0	83	20	80	90	30	80	100	80	7.4
Unity Christian	8	33	50	50	75	25	50	75	0	7.0
West Ottawa	10	70	56	63	56	44	56	31	12	7.2
Zeeland	7	50	71	57	100	43	71	57	14	5.3
Class										
Freshman	7	57	68	62	64	55	55	55	36	7.0
Sophomore	2	47	64	64	68	64	68	56	24	7.0
Junior	15	63	59	29	65	29	41	35	6	6.1
Senior	25	58	48	57	65	61	61	57	13	6.4
Sex										
Female	4	54	57	60	77	52	55	57	23	6.6
Male	18	57	67	51	51	57	59	49	25	6.9
Postsecondary Plans										
Yes, after H.S.	8	53	59	53	69	55	53	48	26	6.7
Yes, after working	11	55	73	73	55	55	73	73	18	6.9
No	46	54	100	86	71	86	100	100	14	6.1
Don't know	0	86	33	50	17	17	17	17	17	7.8

Note: Unless otherwise noted, table entries for (A) through (D) are percentages of individuals who responded affirmatively to the item. All students, n=209, answered (A) and (B). Only students who indicated that they had taken a career class/unit answered (C) and (D). The percentages in (C) add to more than 100 because of multiple responses. The scale for (D) ranged from 1 (low) to 10 (high).
Source: Tabulations from survey of students.

Table 4 provides information about enrollment at Careerline Tech Center and about career activities in which students may have participated. The first column of data in the table shows that 10 percent of the sample of students who were surveyed were taking or had taken classes at CTC. In this sample, the districts that had the largest enrollment percentages were Hamilton and Jenison followed by Grand Haven and Hudsonville. As would be expected, the enrollment was predominantly among Juniors and Seniors, for whom the enrollment percentages were 15 and 25, respectively. (We presume that the 7 percent enrollment of freshmen is in error.) Males were enrolled at a much higher rate than females (18 percent to 4 percent), and almost half of the students who indicated that they did not plan to attend postsecondary schooling were enrolled, as compared to slightly less than 10 percent for those who indicated that they were planning to attend college.

The remainder of table 4 pertains to career units or classes at students' home schools. Over half of the students answered affirmatively that they had taken a career class/unit in secondary school (could have been middle school or high school). The percentage was over 80 percent in three districts: Hamilton, Hudsonville, and Spring Lake. On the other hand, it was relatively low in Holland, Unity Christian, Holland Christian, and Grand Haven. There was not great variation across class, sex, or postsecondary plans in the participation rate in career classes/units.

The remaining columns in the table pertain only to students who indicated that they had participated in a career class/unit. First we asked these students whether they participated in any of the following list of activities: job shadowing, investigating careers on a computer system, taking career aptitude or interest assessments, having speakers, learning how to prepare a resume, learning job interviewing skills, or preparing a four-year course plan (or EDP). On average, about half to two-thirds of the students who reported that they had participated in a career unit indicated that they had

participated in each of these activities, except for the last one–preparing an EDP. As with most of the survey data, there was considerable variation across the districts in these data. All or most of the students at Hudsonville who had participated in a career unit reported that they had done all of the first six activities. Students at Spring Lake had done all of the activities (including completing a course planning form or EDP) except for job shadowing and having speakers. All of the Zeeland High School students recalled aptitude or interest tests, and the Hamilton students had, for the most part, participated in these activities except for researching careers on a computer system.

Only about a quarter of the students reported that they had completed the course planning forms (or EDPs) in their career unit/course. Only Spring Lake seemed to include this in their formal course offering.

The final column in the table gives the mean rating that students who had participated in a career unit gave to that class/unit for its usefulness. The scale that was presented to students ranged from 1 (meaningless) to 10 (extremely valuable and useful). The average rating was a 6.7. Considerably above average were Allendale, Spring Lake, Grand Haven, and West Ottawa. Considerably below average were Zeeland, Holland Christian, and Holland. The usefulness ratings were slightly lower for juniors and seniors, and for students who indicated that they were not planning to go to postsecondary education.

Table 5 displays summary data from questions that all of the students answered about sources of information that they use when they are deciding what classes to take in high school. The questions on the survey asked students whether they relied on any of the following information sources and which of the sources they felt were most important: guidance counselors, teachers, high

Table 5. Information Sources for Class Taking Decisions

	(A) Source														(B) Grade for helpfulness (mean)
	Counselor		Teacher		Handbook		Parent/Guardian		Friend/Acq.		School Staff		Brother/Sister		
	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	Rely on (%)	Most import. (%)	
TOTAL SAMPLE	75	42	49	17	76	41	74	36	63	19	10	2	35	13	3.12
District															
Allendale	65	18	41	12	47	29	65	24	65	41	6	6	24	6	2.81
Grand Haven	62	24	59	21	83	38	69	31	66	31	10	3	31	10	3.11
Hamilton	60	33	60	20	80	47	67	33	53	0	13	0	40	27	2.84
Holland Christian	91	64	55	18	91	55	91	45	82	9	18	0	45	0	3.33
Holland	66	31	46	26	66	40	86	46	57	14	3	3	43	20	3.18
Hudsonville	100	63	50	6	81	56	81	38	56	6	6	0	12	0	3.29
Jenison	79	50	46	17	75	33	71	42	63	4	12	4	33	29	3.10
Spring Lake	67	42	50	25	92	75	33	8	75	42	25	0	42	0	3.58
Unity Christian	100	67	8	0	100	25	75	25	42	0	8	0	42	8	3.56
West Ottawa	74	43	61	17	74	30	74	48	61	26	22	4	35	9	3.00
Zeeland	87	60	47	7	73	40	87	40	80	33	7	0	40	13	2.82
Class															
Freshman	64	32	42	14	68	33	73	33	54	19	7	2	32	16	3.10
Sophomore	72	50	50	22	83	50	70	41	61	15	7	4	28	7	3.16
Junior	89	46	57	18	79	32	68	43	89	32	11	4	50	14	3.04
Senior	90	48	55	12	80	50	83	33	63	18	20	0	40	10	3.18
Sex															
Female	78	45	48	17	80	39	79	33	65	18	9	2	33	12	3.05
Male	71	37	49	16	72	42	67	39	60	22	12	3	38	14	3.22
Postsecondary Plans															
Yes, after H.S.	73	40	46	15	78	40	77	39	63	20	9	1	36	12	3.12
Yes, after working	80	50	55	20	75	45	65	30	65	20	15	10	30	10	3.05
No	77	38	69	31	62	38	77	15	62	15	23	7	46	31	3.33
Don't know	100	57	57	14	71	57	29	29	57	0	0	0	14	0	2.81

Note: Table entries for (A) are percentages of students who checked the information source as one they relied on and one of the most important. Table entries for column (B) are means of an assigned grade from F to A+ converted to a 4.0 scale. All students answered (A) and (B).
Source: Tabulations from survey of students.

school course descriptions/handbook, parents/guardians, friends/acquaintances, school staff other than counselors or teachers, and brother/sister. The survey data are similar to the answers that we got to a similar question in the focus groups. Three-quarters of the students reported that they relied on information from counselors, parents, and the high school handbook when deciding on classes. With only a couple of exceptions, a high percentage of students from every district reported relying on these three information sources. These three sources of information also had the greatest response for the question of which sources were considered the most important.

The next most frequently-mentioned sources of information about classes were friends/acquaintances, teachers, and brothers/sisters. Friends/acquaintances were mentioned by about 60 percent of the students, teachers by about half of the students, and brothers/sisters by about one-third. Despite the substantial differences in the percentages of students who indicated that they relied on these three information sources, approximately 15 percent of students indicated that each was among the most important sources of information. Only a handful of students indicated that they had gotten information from school staff other than teachers or principals.

When the data are examined by class standing of the student, we find that juniors and seniors relied on more information sources than underclassmen. For example, among the seniors, 90 percent indicated that they relied on advice from a guidance counselor and 83 percent relied on advice from their parents/guardians. These contrast with only 64 percent and 73 percent for counselors and parents for freshmen.

The last column in the table presents averages for the responses to a question that asks students to grade the "overall usefulness of the teachers, counselors, and other staff at your high school in helping you plan your courses and your career and college plans. (The students were asked

to literally assign a grade from F to A+). The overall average grade was 3.12 (a B/B+). The grades were particularly high in Spring Lake and Unity Christian. They were relatively low in Zeeland, Allendale, and Hamilton. There was little variation in the helpfulness grade by class, sex, or postsecondary plans.

4.2 Parents

Because of the way that the parent survey was administered with its assurances of anonymity, we were not able to identify the school district in which the students attended. So the parent data presented in tables 6 through 8 provide percentages for the overall sample, and percentages by the class standing of the parents' oldest child in high school and the best grade point averages of the parents' students.

Table 6 presents data as reported by parents about whether their students complete course planning documents, and, if so, how often they're updated. The first columns of data summarize the answers to a question of whether "the high school that your child(ren) attend have career majors or career pathways." Over 40 percent of the parents indicated that they did not know; 35 percent said no (which is the correct answer since none of the high schools in the study had implemented career pathways); and about one-fourth said yes.[4] There seemed to be little variation across class standing or grades of the students.

[4] We hypothesize that parents who answered affirmatively were referring to the existence of career development courses or career and technical education.

Table 6. Parent Responses about Incidence and Timing of Course Planning Documents

	(A) Career pathways?			(B) Ever completed a course planning document?			(C) When completed first time?					(D) How often updated?					(E) Revised this year? (%)	(F) Sample (%)
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK	Before 8th	8th	9th	After 9th	Don't remember	At least once/yr	Exactly once/yr	As needed	Never	DK		
TOTAL SAMPLE	23%	35	43	85%	6	9	6%	68	20	1	4	4%	76	6	3	11	81	100%
Class (Oldest child)																		
Freshman	18%	29	53	87%	4	9	8%	62	31	0	0	3%	69	7	3	18	79	27%
Sophomore	26%	33	41	90%	8	3	11%	74	11	0	3	3%	77	9	3	20	91	24
Junior	17%	40	43	77%	7	17	0%	87	9	0	4	0%	83	4	4	9	82	18
Senior	28%	38	34	84%	6	10	5%	57	24	5	10	10%	79	2	2	7	75	31
Grades (Best)																		
Mostly A	22%	43	35	92%	5	3	5%	67	22	2	4	4%	78	2	4	13	79	36%
A & B	29%	34	37	80%	10	10	9%	58	24	3	6	6%	82	3	6	3	78	25
Mostly B	20%	40	40	87%	10	3	0%	77	23	0	0	4%	81	8	0	8	84	18
B & C	18%	29	53	76%	0	24	15%	62	23	0	0	8%	54	23	0	15	92	10
Mostly C	13%	25	63	75%	0	25	0%	67	0	0	33	0%	67	0	0	33	80	5
C & D	17%	0	83	67%	0	33	25%	75	0	0	0	0%	50	25	0	25	75	4
Mostly D	33%	0	67	100%	0	0	0%	67	33	0	0	0%	100	0	0	0	67	2

Note: DK means don't know. Table entries in (A) through (E) are row percentages of the sample who answered the item. For (A) and (B), the entire sample answered the item, n=166. For (C) through (E), only individuals who answered "Yes" to item (B) answered the items. Row percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Column (F) entries are column percentages of the full sample. Again, they may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: Tabulations from survey of parents.

Almost all of the parents (85 percent of the total respondents) indicated that the students had completed a course planning document. This is very close to the percentage of students who reported that they had completed such a document (82 percent). The rest of the data in the table come from the parents who indicated that their students had completed a course planning form. About three-quarters of them indicated that the form had been completed for the first time in 8th grade or before. Twenty percent said that the form had been completed for the first time in 9th grade. These percentages compare to 64 and 24 for the students. Inexplicably, parents whose oldest child in high school was a freshman or was a senior had a much lower propensity to indicate that the form had been filled out in 8th grade than if their oldest child in high school was a sophomore or junior.

Parents reported more frequent updating and revisions of the course planning form than students did. About 80 percent of the parents felt that course planning forms were updated at least once/year and had been reviewed and revised this year. A little over 10 percent of the parents indicated that they did not know how often these forms were updated. These percentages contrast with the student data. Over 20 percent of the students reported that the course planning forms are never updated, and over one-fourth indicated that they were not revised this (academic) year.

Table 7 provides data from the parent survey about characteristics of the course planning documents. Again, the data for these items were supplied only by the respondents who had indicated that their students had completed course planning forms. When asked whether the form is called an EDP, most parents responded that they did not know–60 percent. About one-quarter of the parents said no, and the remaining 15 percent answered affirmatively.

Table 7. Parent Responses about Characteristics of Course Planning Documents

	(A) Called EDP?			(B) Level of Involvement			(C) Meet w/School Staff (%)	(D) Signed?			(E) Usefulness Rating (mean)
	Yes	No	DK	Active	Aware	None		Yes	No	Don't remember	
TOTAL SAMPLE	14%	26	60	63%	27	10	34	42%	40	18	7.3
Class (Oldest child)											
Freshman	10%	23	67	61%	24	16	38	34%	42	24	7.0
Sophomore	20%	31	49	63%	25	11	29	43%	43	14	7.7
Junior	18%	23	59	77%	23	0	35	39%	35	26	7.6
Senior	10%	26	64	57%	33	10	33	50%	38	12	6.9
Grades (Best)											
Mostly A	9%	26	65	59%	31	9	22	42%	42	16	7.1
A & B	24%	24	52	67%	21	12	36	55%	36	9	7.7
Mostly B	8%	31	62	65%	27	8	50	42%	31	27	7.1
B & C	15%	23	62	54%	38	8	62	17%	50	33	6.7
Mostly C	17%	33	50	100%	0	0	17	33%	50	17	8.2
C & D	0%	25	75	50%	25	25	25	25%	50	25	7.0
Mostly D	33%	0	67	67%	0	33	33	33%	67	0	7.7

Note: DK means don't know. Unless otherwise noted, table entries are row percentages for individuals who replied "Yes" to item (B) on table 6, n=141. Row percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Item (E) is mean rating provided by the same sample of a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high).
Source: Tabulations of survey of parents.

The majority of parents indicated that they get actively involved in helping their child(ren) complete the course planning form. About 63 percent of the parents who reported that their students had completed a form indicated that they are actively involved in helping to complete the form. A little over one-fourth of the parents indicated that they were aware of the form, but they didn't actively help. Ten percent of the parents indicated that they did not help with the form. These data correspond almost precisely to the student data. A majority of student respondents (62 percent) indicated that their parents were a source of information that they used in completing their course planning forms.

About one-third of the parents/guardians indicated that they had met with or telephoned a guidance counselor or other school staff person regarding their child's selections of courses. This was a much higher percentage than we had expected based on conversations with guidance counselors. Furthermore, we had anticipated that parents of freshmen students would be more likely to say that they had talked to a counselor than parents of older students. However, the percentage for freshman parents was only slightly higher than for other classes.

Just under 20 percent of the parents indicated that they did not recall whether they had signed the course planning form for their students. About half of the rest of the parents indicated that they had signed, and half indicated that they had not signed. The percentage of parents who indicated that they signed their child(ren)'s forms is lower than the percentage of students who indicated that they got parent signatures on their forms. Two-thirds of the students indicated that they got parental signatures on their course planning forms.

The final item of data in table 7 in the right-most column is average ratings for the usefulness of the course planning documents. On a scale from 1 (a meaningless bureaucratic piece of paper) to

10 (extremely valuable and useful), parents rated them at a 7.3. This is a reasonably high rating that does not vary much by the class of the child or the grades of the child.

Table 8 provides information about whether their child is enrolled at Careerline Tech Center and about sources of information used by students in trying to decide what classes to take in high school. About 8 percent of the parents indicated that at least one of their children were enrolled in CTC. Notably, all of the parents of CTC students indicated that their child(ren) were in 11th or 12th grade. Furthermore, the enrollment in CTC seemed to be an inverse relationship with the GPA of the family's best student. About 5-7 percent of parents whose students had grades of mostly A or A & B, as compared to 20-25 percent for parents of students were mostly C or lower than C.

The parents' reports about who helps students decide on classes to take in high school resulted in similar summary data as student's direct reports. Parents suggested that counselors and parents were the two most frequently used sources of information. Over three-quarters of the parents cited these sources. Handbook course descriptions were the next highest ranked item–at 63 percent–which is a lower reliance than what the students reported. Only 31 percent of parents indicated that their students relied on information from friends in considering course selection, whereas 63 percent of the students reported that they relied on friends. This discrepancy is understandable since parents would not have direct evidence, and what is interesting is that students and parents are very close in terms of reporting that friends/acquaintances are among the most important sources of information—students reported this to be the case in 19 percent of the observations; parents in 11 percent.

Table 8. Parent Responses about Information Sources for Class Taking Decisions

	(A) Classes at CTC? (%)	(B) Source														(C) Grade for helpfulness (mean)
		Counselor		Teacher		Handbook		Parents		Friends		Staff		Brother/Sister		
		Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	Source (%)	Most import. (%)	
TOTAL SAMPLE	8	78	55	51	21	63	30	79	46	31	11	3	2	20	10	2.84
Class (Oldest child)																
Freshman	0	76	51	47	24	56	24	76	42	29	9	0	0	13	9	2.86
Sophomore	0	82	56	62	18	77	36	82	33	26	10	0	0	7	7	3.07
Junior	7	80	60	53	20	67	33	80	60	30	20	3	0	27	3	2.61
Senior	20	76	54	44	20	56	30	80	50	38	10	8	4	30	14	2.79
Grades (Best)																
Mostly A	7	78	55	55	20	65	30	85	43	23	7	3	2	22	7	2.88
A & B	5	83	54	56	20	59	22	85	46	34	10	2	2	24	7	2.95
Mostly B	7	77	50	43	13	70	47	77	53	23	17	7	3	10	10	2.78
B & C	13	71	65	71	29	71	24	71	29	47	18	0	0	24	12	2.80
Mostly C	25	75	63	13	13	63	63	63	38	13	0	0	0	13	13	2.42
C & D	17	83	67	17	17	50	17	67	67	67	33	0	0	17	17	2.73
Mostly D	0	67	33	33	0	0	0	33	33	100	0	0	0	0	0	2.55

Note: Table entries for (A) are percentages of entire sample, n=166, who indicated their child attends CTC. Table entries for (B) are percentages of parents in entire sample who checked the information source as one their student used and one of the most important. Table entries for column (C) are means of an assigned grade from F to A+ converted to a 4.0 scale. All parents answered (A) through (C).
Source: Tabulations from survey of parents.

The final column of the table provides the average results for grades assigned to schools in terms of usefulness in helping to plan courses. The parents were "harder" graders than the students. Their average grade was a 2.84 (equivalent to a B-), as compared to the 3.12 for students. There was not substantial variation across class or grades.

4.3 Summary

The general tenor of the survey data is that most students and parents remember or have some knowledge of a general course planning form that lays out a plan for coursetaking during high school. About two-thirds of the parents are consulted or can be described as actively involved in completing that form. Besides parents, the major sources of information about courses that students rely on are guidance counselors and written course descriptions. As might be expected, a sizeable share of students get information about classes from friends, acquaintances, or siblings, but these individuals are not reported to be among the most important sources of information. Students are reasonably happy with the extent to which schools help with course planning and career/college plans; parents seem less satisfied.

The data suggest that a little over half of the students participated in a formal career unit or course in middle school or high school. Different school districts included different activities in these units/courses, but on average, 60 percent of the students who indicated that they had been in a unit/course participated in job shadowing, computer searches, career aptitude/interest testing, speakers, resume preparation, and interviewing skills.

5. Curriculum Impacts

Given that only 7 of the 12 curriculum directors answered the survey, it may be easiest to summarize the information that was received on a question-by-question basis. An attempt has been made to conceal any information that may identify the respondent.

> *Question 1:* Does your district do EDP's or four-year course planning forms? How, if at all, is the curriculum supportive of them?

-The high school principal meets with each student and their parents to look at goals and plan their high school studies. The curriculum is supportive in having courses available for the college preparatory needs and utilizing the Tech Center for those working toward skills in technical areas.

-Yes, in grade 8.

-Yes. 7th graders take an exploratory course in careers, 8th graders attend a job fair and are involved in a job shadowing experience, 9th graders are involved in a job shadowing experience at GVSU and are asked to write a research paper in English relating to a career of interest, 10th graders take the ACT PLAN test and also take a field trip to the CTC to learn about educational, career-oriented opportunities.

-Our counseling office has used a 4-year planning form. We are moving to a 3-ring binder portfolio/EDP/planning form combination. At the 7th and 8th grade, the counselor introduces the planning process, does interest inventories, etc. The 7th and 8th grade teams build in some career awareness activities throughout the year, including job shadows and business visits. The 9th grade English instructors have responsibility for helping the students organize the portfolio notebooks and having the students add to specific sections (personal, academic). The students review their portfolios with an adult as part of the evaluation process. Next year, the 10th grade English teachers will incorporate the resume, business letter, etc. writing that they have been doing. They are going to try to structure a career research project also. These will be added to the notebooks.

-Yes. Courses are selected on the basis of career goals.

-Yes.

-Yes, but through our counseling office.

Question 2: Is your district involved in or has it considered Transitions Accreditation? If so, how does this affect class selection and registration by students?

-Yes, high school is beginning the process.

-Yes, we are in year 3. Does not necessarily have any bearing on class selection or registration.

-No, we are involved in Outcomes Accreditation at this time.

-No.

-No.

-No, we are in the middle of Outcomes Accreditation.

-I don't believe it affects these things.

Question 3: We can simplistically divide career development of youth into three stages: career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation. I am interested in the first two stages: awareness and exploration. (I assume that your career and technical education classes at your high school and Careerline Tech Center involve career preparation.) Does the curriculum in your district (school) systematically include career awareness or career exploration units/activities in grades 6-8? In grades 9-12?

-In grades 6-8, yes. 2 careers are "assigned" to each grade, K-6. In grade 8, all students research a career, and then present the career at a multi-day job fair for students and their parents. In grades 9-12, we have no plan. Job shadowing is on an ad hoc basis.

-There are some studies within classes at 6-8, and there is a job shadowing process. I know at the elementary level we try to integrate career awareness and exploration into our everyday learning. An example would be a unit on baseball and statistics, where they also studied the careers associated with baseball and those using statistics. Another grade level studies the local community. Within that study, they look at the careers at the city hall, the fire department, police, and in the tourist industry.

-Yes.

-In some cases, yes, but not as much as we could or should.

-In grades 6-8, we have an exploratory for all students. In 9-12, our students take the ACT PLAN at 10th grade and the ACT Work Keys at 11th grade.

-As I described in my answer to the first question, our 7th and 8th grades are the most organized about career awareness. I'm not sure you could classify any of their activities as career exploration, although they do job shadows and business visits. In the high school, there are co-op opportunities and a Careers class, but not all students participate.

-7th graders take an exploratory course in careers. 8th graders attend a job fair and are involved in a job shadowing experience. In high school, 9th graders are involved in a job shadowing experience at GVSU and are asked to write a research paper in English relating to a career of interest. 10th graders take the ACT PLAN test and also take a field trip to the CTC to learn about educational, career-oriented opportunities.

Question 4: (If some career awareness or exploration activities in #3). Are these required/ offered to all students? What percentage of students would participate?

-Not required.

-Yes, 90%.

-All students.

-All 7th and 8th graders participate. Probably about 25% of high school students.

-All students. This is core curriculum in K-8.

-These activities are required/offered to all students at the appropriate grade levels. Approx. 95%-99% participate.

Question 5: (If not answered previously.) Does the special education curriculum include career awareness and career exploration?

-Yes.

-One program has a very definite career awareness and exploration component (the self-contained program). The needs of the other students are addressed through the IEP process.

-Yes.

-They do the same as all students.

-Yes.

-Special education students receive the same opportunities. We are also looking at developing a community-based career exploration option for special education students at the 9th–10th grade level.

-Special education students in K-8 learn with the general education students. At high school, self-contained special education students receive one-on-one career preparation.

Question 6: Does your district (school) do any integrated thematic instruction (ITI) with career topics? If so, please describe.

-No.

-The 8th grade does a project called "Reality Store," which incorporates the career topics taught during the year. It is a simulation project.

-Topics/careers in K-6 are tied to units in core curriculum, e.g., electrician in grade 3 where electricity is studied.

-Not with a career topic, but often a career topic falls within the topic being covered.

-Somewhat, but not across the board. Our NCA Transitions Accreditation will help us pull that together.

-No, our ITI units are generally related to core content.

Question 7: Does your district (school) do any curriculum integration with Careerline Tech Center programs in any program area? (Note: collaboration is meant to be formal or informal.)

-We have in the past, but are not currently collaborating.

-I am not familiar with any.

-No.

-Yes.

-Not that I know of.

-Yes. Mostly within our Technology Education department within their Woods and Metals courses.

-Not really.

Question 8: Is your district involved in or has it considered Career Pathways? What are the important factors in this decision for the district? If on or moving toward Pathways, how will this affect class selection and registration?

-Not considering Pathways.

-Not at this point.

-We are just beginning to consider Career Pathways. An important factor was the programming already in place. Class enrollment will remain open to all. Career Pathways will organize and make job shadows and internships a part of the core curriculum.

-Although we try to help students understand how careers are clustered, we don't have a Pathways approach. We are too small and our options are limited.

-I am not aware of any discussion about this.

-No.

-Not at this time, but may in the future.

Question 9: Is your district involved in or has it considered block scheduling? What are the important factors for the district in this decision?

-No.

-Yes, we have block scheduling. The most important factor was an ability to give students more choices in course selection. It has been here for about 4 years. It has been somewhat controversial with the community, but we have no plans to do away with it.

-No, we see little need to change.

-The high school examined this several years ago. They read research and attended conferences about this. The decision was to not pursue this as it did not have the support of the staff and there was concern about how some subjects would be handled in the longer periods of time. Personally, my own sons attended a high school that had block scheduling and we all loved it. It gave them extended time to interact with staff and less passing time, more individual attention during seminars and class, and helped them to be more organized about homework. They made the transition to college very easily.

-We have considered it, but have not adopted it. Cost of increased staff and lack of definitive research supporting it are factors.

-We are experimenting with block scheduling at the high school.

-The board has given approval for the implementation of block scheduling in the 2001-2002 school year. Teacher support and training are critical. We also need to work out the logistics of scheduling and the curriculum implications.

Question 10: Do you offer a seminar period in your high school? Is it tied into class registration/selection, or college and career planning?

-No.

-There is a seminar period in the high school, but I am unfamiliar with what they are assigned to complete with the students.

-No.

-No.

-Yes, and used for multiple things including registration, college and career planning, and teacher assistance.

-No.

-No.

Question 11: What does your district (school) do well in the way of helping students select classes, plan for postsecondary education, and plan for careers? What would you tout?

-1-on-1 counseling and school-to-career advocacy and interviewing.

-Our students have the opportunity to access information on careers through computer programs. They also have begun a positive job shadowing program for 8th graders.

-The best thing we are doing is NCA Transitions Accreditation.

-It is very individualized. There is a college night, bunches of resources, but nothing more generalized than the work that the counselors do.

-Individualized planning conferences each year; parents included in the conference for 9th graders and are always informed.

-Seminars for parents and students; meeting with individual students to lay out a plan.

-One-on-one counseling, group presentations, four year plans, tech center visitation, Muskegon Career Fair, GVSU Career Day, 8th grade career fair at MCC, GVSU College Exploration, college visits and representatives, PLAN test, Job/Volunteer Fair, MOIS, Bridges, speakers, Careers class, 9th grade English career unit, ECO

Questions 12: What improvement could be made, especially in terms of curricular changes?

-Something to support an internship or co-op program would be a great addition to our programs.

-Core curriculum experiences in grades 9-12.

-Formally involve all students in MOIS and/or COPS and keep file record of data.

-NCA Transitions says we must credential and offer interventions to students. This has helped us look at how curriculum and instruction are so closely tied together.

-At this point, everyone is feeling overwhelmed. We are trying to be effective with academics, address individual needs, and help provide students with the information they need to make those decisions. We are in the middle of an NCA Outcomes accreditation process right now, so there may be some changes in the future.

-I personally would like to see high school students connected with mentors in areas of their interest and have them work with and complete projects with those mentors over a period of time. I believe then they would have a realistic picture of the career(s) they are considering.

6. Conclusions

Educational development plans (EDPs), the extent to which students consider their career and educational plans when they select courses, career development activities, and career and technical education do not seem to engender much excitement or interest among students and staff in the Ottawa Area ISD. It is quite apparent that the districts, staff, students, and parents at the 12 schools that participated in the study were most concerned with college preparation and entrance. Over 80 percent of the students indicated that they are planning to attend college right after high school, and another 10 percent indicated that they are planning to attend college eventually after working for a few years. A few of the staff members did feel as though students who were not going on to a postsecondary institution were getting shortchanged, and that more could and should be done for them.

The notion of organizing high school curricula into Career Pathways did not seem to be on the radar screens of the educators that we interviewed, with only a few exceptions. It should be noted that Career Pathways are intended to address two problems: (1) they are intended to motivate students who are uninterested in high school and may be dropout-prone, by tying high school classes to careers (answering the students' lament of 'Why are we learning this?'), and (2) they are intended to help students be more purposeful and planful in their selection of courses. Students can make decisions in their 9th or 10th grade year that may have a powerful influence on what careers they may pursue later on, and if those decisions are not well-informed, then they may result in lost opportunities. To their credit, guidance counselors seemed to be aware of these issues for the most part, but they seem to feel that the status quo processes are adequate to provide appropriate advice.

We believe that a substantial share of students, perhaps 60-70 percent, have given serious thought to potential careers–a much higher percentage than most educators seemed to be willing to concede. It is likely that many of these students came to their career choices through career development activities in schools. While we do not doubt that the career interests of most of the students are likely to change, it does seem like the seriousness with which they are taking their current plans is an opportunity that educators could exploit for motivation and/or learning opportunities. Given the seriousness of the students about careers, teachers could motivate research projects or class lessons around those careers.

It appears as though the traditional stigmatic view of career and technical education is not changing rapidly in the county. Most students and staff that we interviewed were "open" to and respectful of the opportunities at Careerline Tech Center, but comments suggested that they both

implicitly and explicitly believed that attending the Tech Center was anathema to getting into college.

In short, we found very little unhappiness with and very little interest in changing the status quo with respect to how students plan and select their courses, or how much career development emphasis to integrate into the curriculum. A substantial majority of students and staff were not interested in on-line registration mainly because they worried about losing one-on-one access between student and counselor.

There appeared to be very little collaboration between the school districts in the OAISD. The Careerline Tech Center is the exception, but even here, most of the high schools seemed to offer students the Tech Center option, but to have little knowledge or interest in collaborating with it. Most high schools were struggling with exactly how much time to spend on careers and on what activities to have students engage in, so there seems to be a great opportunity for the districts to get together to develop an approach or options that could be implemented in schools.

As we interviewed individuals and visited high schools, we were struck by a couple of dilemmas that do not seem to be easily solved. First most job shadowing activities take place in 7th or 8th grade. Yet many students and some staff felt that this was too young an age; many students did not take it seriously. Many staff and some students felt as though there should be more job shadowing in high school when students might get more out of the experiences. The dilemma is that job shadowing seems to be most easily scheduled in the middle school years, but it may be more meaningful to students in high school, when it is more difficult to schedule. Second, most districts have students complete their EDP's and give students career information in 8th or 9th grade, and yet schedules are almost completely filled with required courses in those grades. When

students encounter more electives in their junior and senior years, there seems to be less emphasis on careers.

One of the key topics of inquiry for this study was the extent to which the individualized planning processes that characterize special education had been implemented in general education. We encountered almost no movement in that direction, but rather districts and staff seem to be thinking in the opposite direction–making sure that special education students receive the same processes that other students receive.

And yet one principal thought it would be a great advancement to have IEP conferences for all students. Think about it . . .

> *In 8th grade, students study careers. They research one or two careers that interest them. They take one or more assessments of their aptitudes and their interests. They develop an EDP that lists what careers they might be interested in and what classes they plan to take in high school. During the second semester of the 8th grade, a conference is held for all students. Attending the conference are the student, his/her parent or guardian, a guidance counselor, and a teacher who knows the student. (If the student's parents cannot or do not want to attend, another adult from the community attends.) During the conference, the student presents his/her plans from the EDP and gives a rationale for them. The school personnel make sure that the student and family are aware of "special opportunities" in the high school such as job shadowing, internships, community service, AP classes, dual enrollment, and so forth. The students and adults discuss the EDP and come to a consensus about it. The school then registers and schedules the student for 9th grade. A copy of the EDP is given to the student and family in hard or soft format, and a copy is electronically sent to the counselors in the high school.*
>
> *During the second semesters of the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, the high school counselors meet individually with the students (extending an opportunity to include the parents or other adults). A copy of the EDP is given to the student to update along with an up to date handbook with descriptions of classes and "special opportunities" available to the students. The student is charged with the responsibility of presenting any changes to the counselor. The student and counselor go over the EDP, and change it if the student's interests have changed. Course selection is tied to the student's career and college plans and interests.*

This is a vision of how educators, students, and parents could interact to ensure a relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all students. We met one individual for whom this vision was a "gleam in his eye." For virtually everyone else, such a scenario was not even "on the radar screen." The high schools in the OAISD will have a significant adjustment to make if State initiatives in the areas of Career Pathways and on-line EDP's get mandated.

Appendix 1: Site Visit Interview and Focus Group Forms

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

High School _____

Date _____

1. I would like to start out by asking you for your first names and what grade level you're in. (If not already done so, could you put your first name on the tent cards?)

   (left to right)

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

2. Could one of you describe for me the process that you go through to sign up for classes for the next year (**not** how you decide exactly which classes to take, just the ***process***). I'm particularly interested in knowing **when** you sign up for classes and whether you have a form or a plan that you use. (OTHERS: Comment on the extent to which your experiences are similar/different.

3. Does your school have a minimum number of credits necessary for graduation? If so, what is that minimum? Does your school require a certain number of classes in different subjects like math, science, English, etc.? If so, what are those requirements?

4. When you're choosing particular classes to take, how important are each of the following things? (Scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means not important and 10 means very important.)

Your parents' opinions _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Guidance counselor advice _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Classes that your friends are taking _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
What colleges want _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Your teachers' opinions _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
High school course of study handbook _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Your career plans _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

5. Now I'm interested in a little more detail about the role that some of these folks or some of these things play in the process of deciding upon which classes to take. So how, if at all, do each of the following help you to decide what classes to take? What sources of information do you rely upon? Please try to give me examples so that I can better understand.

a. Your parents?

b. Guidance counselor?

c. Your friends?

d. What colleges want?

e. Your teachers?

f. Your high school course of study (course descriptions)?

g. Your career plans?

6. Your school gave me a copy of this form. (SHOW FORM.) Are all of you familiar with this form? Do you update this form every year? Do you get all of the signatures that are required?

7. How useful is this form on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it is useless, bureaucratic paperwork and 10 means that it is very useful?

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

8. (Important) How might your teachers, counselors, (school) make the process of selecting courses better/easier? (PROBE: technology like Internet or telephone, more information). Have any of you had an experience (or know of another student who experienced) of taking a course and then finding out you should have signed up for a different class? What did you do? How helpful was the school?

9. Have you been given information about the programs at Careerline Tech, and if so, when? What were some important factors in your decision about whether or not take classes there? Do you think you got good advice about these courses? Why or why not?

COUNSELORS

High School _____

Date _____

Name(s) _____

_____

1. Could one of you describe for me the process that you have students go through to sign up for classes for the next year? I'm particularly interested in knowing **when** you have students sign up for classes and whether you have a form or a plan that you have students complete.

2. Do the EDPs (or plans) get filed, and updated as students change classes and over time? If so, where are they filed? Who is responsible? Who has access to them?

How useful is this form on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means it is useless, bureaucratic paperwork and 10 means that it is very useful?

3. (If not already answered), to what extent do you get involved in helping students select courses? What information do you provide them? How do you attempt to match students to the right courses for them?

4. To your knowledge, to what extent do parents get involved in helping with the course selection process? In general, is this involvement good or bad?

5. Are students who are interested in attending postsecondary schooling pretty knowledgeable about what courses those institutions want students to take? How do students learn this information? Do you get involved?

6. Have most students identified (general or specific) career interests? Does your school or district provide them with career exploration units or courses? If so, please describe.

7. To what extent, do students' career plans influence their selection of courses, if at all? Please give me some examples, if you are able.

8. In your opinion, what are the best aspects of the way that you, your school, and/or your district help young decide on courses, make postsecondary education decisions, or make career decisions?

9. (Important) How might the processes by improved? (PROBE: technology like Internet or telephone, more information.)

10. Do you provide students with information about the programs at Careerline Tech, and if so, when? Are you familiar with those programs, and if so, how did you learn about them?

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TEACHERS

High School _____

Date _____

Name(s) _____

_____

1. Could you describe for me in general terms your curriculum or outline of what you attempt to cover in your career development courses/units?

2. What activities do students engage in? Do all students participate in these activities? Do students receive a grade for their participation?

Activity	All?	Graded?

3. Do you provide students with information about the programs at Careerline Tech, and if so, when? Are you familiar with those programs, and if so, how did you learn about them?

4. In your opinion, do most students formulate realistic career plans that they are serious about when they are in high school? Why do you say that?

5. Are you familiar with, and if so, could you describe for me, how students plan and sign up for courses at this school? Does the school/district have a form or EDP that is used? How useful is this form?

6. Is the process of selecting courses in high school (or in college) tied into your career development class/unit? If so, how? To what extent do students' career plans influence their selection of courses, if at all? Please give me some examples, if you are able.

7. Are students who are interested in attending postsecondary schooling pretty knowledgeable about what courses those institutions want students to take? How do students learn this information? Do you get involved? Is that part of what you teach in your careers unit/course?

8. In your opinion, what are the best aspects of the way that you, your school, and/or your district help young decide on courses, make postsecondary education decisions, or make career decisions?

9. (Important) How might the processes be improved? (PROBE: technology and Internet.)

Appendix 2: Student and Parent Survey Forms and Permission Letter

Educational Development Plan Survey

This is a voluntary, but important, survey of high school students. We are conducting a study about the use and effectiveness of educational development plans (EDPs) in high schools. (Some schools refer to EDPs as 4-year or 6-year Course Planning Forms.) We would like to know how EDPs or course planning forms help students make decisions about their classes. Furthermore, we would like to know if EDPs are useful for students in making their plans for careers or education after high school. Your cooperation and participation will be very helpful in making EDPs more useful for students in the future.

All information that would permit identification of you will be held in strict confidence, will be used only by persons engaged in and for purposes of this survey, and will not be disclosed or released to others.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

2. We are asking you these questions in order to gather information about your Educational Development Plans (EDPs) and your career and postsecondary education plans.

3. Your responses will be merged with those of other students, and the answers you give will never be identified as yours.

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY.

Some questions may not pertain to you depending on your answers to other questions. To save you time, we have printed the phrase SKIP TO QUESTION XX next to some responses. If you encounter that phrase next to a square that you have marked, you may go directly to that question and leave all of the questions in between blank.

It is important that you follow the directions for responding to each kind of question. These are:

- FOR QUESTIONS THAT ASK YOU TO WRITE IN INFORMATION, PLEASE PRINT THE INFORMATION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.

- SOME QUESTIONS WILL ASK YOU TO MARK ONE RESPONSE. AN EXAMPLE FOLLOWS:

(Over)

What is the color of your eyes? (MARK ONE)

Brown ☐
Blue ☐
Green ■
Another color ☐

If the color of your eyes were green,
you would mark the square to the right of green.

- SOME QUESTIONS WILL ASK YOU TO MARK ALL RESPONSES THAT APPLY. AN EXAMPLE FOLLOWS:

Last week, did you do any of the following? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

See a play ☐
Go to a movie ■
Attend a sporting event ■

If you went to a movie and attended a sporting event
last week, you would mark the two squares as shown.

- SOME QUESTIONS WILL ASK YOU TO MARK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH LINE. AN EXAMPLE FOLLOWS:

Do you plan to do any of the following next week? (MARK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH LINE)

		Yes	Not Sure	No
a.	Visit a relative	☐	☐	■
b.	Go to a museum	☐	■	☐
c.	Study at a friend's house	■	☐	☐

If you plan to study at a friend's house, do not plan to visit
a relative, and are not sure about going to a museum
next week, you would mark one square on each line as shown.

This questionnaire is not a test. We hope you will answer every question, but you may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

1. What is your present high school class? What year did you first enroll in this high school? (MARK ONE IN EACH COLUMN)

	(a) Current Class	(b) First Enrolled
Freshman	☐	☐
Sophomore	☐	☐
Junior	☐	☐
Senior	☐	☐

2. Which of the following best describes your grades so far in high school? (MARK ONE)

- Mostly A (a grade point average of near 4.0) ☐
- About half A and half B (GPA around 3.5) ☐
- Mostly B (GPA around 3.0) ☐
- About half B and half C (GPA around 2.5) ☐
- Mostly C (GPA around 2.0) ☐
- About half C and half D (GPA around 1.5) ☐
- Mostly D (GPA around 1.0) ☐
- Mostly below D (GPA below 1.0) ☐

3. Some high schools organize courses and programs of study into broad categories called **career pathways or career majors**. If you are in a high school with career majors or career pathways, use the first column to mark which pathway you are currently in. If you are unfamiliar with career pathways or your high school has not organized courses along these lines, use the second column to indicate what career major sounds most appropriate for you. (MARK ONE IN EITHER COLUMN 1 OR COLUMN 2, BUT NOT BOTH)

	(1) My Career Major	(2) A Career Major that Sounds Appropriate
Arts and communications (includes fine arts; performing arts; journalism; broadcasting)	☐	☐
Business and business-related (includes marketing; retail sales; secretaries; business managers)	☐	☐
Engineering, manufacturing, and industrial (includes architects; construction; engineers; pilots)	☐	☐
Health services (includes pharmacists; nurses; physicians; dentists; veterinarians; medical assistants)	☐	☐
Human services (includes teachers; lawyers; law enforcement; social workers; cosmetology)	☐	☐
Agriscience and Natural Resources (includes environmentalists; farmers; landscape architects)	☐	☐
Other (please name _____)	☐	☐

4. Have you ever completed a document or form that lists courses that you plan to take in high school? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 17**
Don't Know ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 17**

5. When did you first complete such a document? (MARK ONE)

Before 8th grade ..... ☐
8th grade ..... ☐
9th grade ..... ☐
After 9th grade ..... ☐
Don't remember ..... ☐

6. How often do you review and update, if necessary, this form? (MARK ONE)

Never reviewed or updated ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 9**
Reviewed or updated at least once while in high school, but I don't review or update it as frequently as once per year ... ☐
Once a year ..... ☐
More often than once a year ..... ☐

7. Have you reviewed or updated the document or form during this school year? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 9**

8. When was the most recent time (month/year) that you reviewed or updated the document during this year?

_____ / _____ or Don't remember ..... ☐
(month) (year)

9. Does your high school refer to this document as an EDP? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐
Don't Know ..... ☐

10. Which of the following sources of information did you rely on to complete the document or plan the first time you filled it out or when you revised it? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Brother/sister ☐
b. Friends/acquaintances ☐
c. Guidance counselor(s) ☐
d. High school course description handbook ☐
e. Parents/guardians ☐
f. School staff member other than teacher or guidance counselor ☐
g. Teacher(s) ☐
h. Your own knowledge about courses or teachers ☐
i. Other: _____ ☐

11. Do any of the following individuals officially sign the document or plan? (MARK ONE IN EACH ROW)

	YES	NO	Don't Know
a. Your parents/guardians	☐	☐	☐
b. A guidance counselor(s)	☐	☐	☐
c. A teacher(s)	☐	☐	☐

12. Are any of the following items of information on the document or plan? (MARK ONE IN EACH ROW)

	YES	NO	Don't Know
a. Test scores	☐	☐	☐
b. College that you plan to attend	☐	☐	☐
c. Careers or jobs you plan to have	☐	☐	☐
d. College courses that you plan to take	☐	☐	☐

13. How do you use the document or form? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. It is a planning document that I use when I am figuring out courses that I want to take ☐
b. It is an official document that I give to a counselor/high school staff member to sign up for courses ☐
c. I use it as a source of information about courses and credit requirements ☐
d. I do use it or I plan to use it as a portfolio for employment or college ☐

14. How would you rate the usefulness to you of the course planning document (EDP) on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means extremely useful, and 1 means a meaningless bureaucratic piece of paper?

_____
(FILL IN A RATING FROM 1 TO 10)

15. How many copies of the document or plan are there that you know about? (MARK ONE)

One ..... ☐
Two ..... ☐
Three ..... ☐
More than three ..... ☐
Don't know ..... ☐

16. Where is this document and copies, if any, stored? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

In my high school -
– in the guidance office ..... ☐
– elsewhere in the school ..... ☐
At home ..... ☐
On a diskette ..... ☐
On an internet site ..... ☐
Some other place (please name) _____ ..... ☐
Not stored ..... ☐
Don't know ..... ☐

17. Do you have an individualized educational plan (IEP)? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 19**
Don't know ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 19**

18. a. Is your IEP the same document or plan that you referred to in answering questions 4 through 16? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐

b. Does your IEP indicate what career or job you plan to have after high school?

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐

19. Have you taken or are you taking classes at Careerline Tech?

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 21**

20. Have you completed a document or form <u>different from the document or plan that you referred to in questions 4 through 16</u> that lists the courses you have taken or plan to take <u>at Careerline</u>?

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐

21. Does your school offer students the opportunity to take classes at another high school, at a college campus, and/or over the Internet? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

Another high school ..... ☐
College campus ..... ☐
Internet ..... ☐
None of the above ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 23**
Don't know ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 23**

22. How did you find out about these opportunities? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Guidance counselor(s) ..... ☐
b. Teacher(s) ..... ☐
c. High school course description handbook ..... ☐
d. Parents/guardians ..... ☐
e. Friends/acquaintances ..... ☐
f. School staff member other than teacher, guidance counselor (for example, principal) ..... ☐
g. Brother/sister ..... ☐

23. Have you taken any classes in high school or middle school about careers or have any of the classes that you have taken had units on careers?

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO NOTE RIGHT BEFORE QUESTION 27.**

24. Please list the classes and grade levels. (FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU HAD A UNIT ON CAREERS IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN 8TH GRADE, THEN LIST "SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 8.")

	CLASS	GRADE
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

25. What activities did you engage in during your classes on careers? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Job shadowing ☐
b. Investigating careers on a computer system ☐
c. Taking tests that measured abilities or interests in different careers ☐
d. Listening to speakers come to class describing different careers ☐
e. Learning how to prepare a resume or job application ☐
f. Interviewing skills ☐
g. Preparing a four-year course planning document or EDP ☐

26. How would you rate the usefulness to you of the career classes or units that you had on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means extremely valuable and useful, and 1 means meaningless and that you hardly remember anything about the classes.

_____
(FILL IN A RATING FROM 1 TO 10)

Note: The next three questions deal with how you generally decide to take specific classes in high school, whether or not you completed an EDP or course planning form.

27. When you are trying to decide what classes to take in high school, which of the following sources of information do you rely on? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Guidance counselor(s) ☐
b. Teacher(s) ☐
c. High school course description handbook ☐
d. Parents/guardians ☐
e. Friends/acquaintances ☐
f. School staff member other than teacher, guidance counselor (for example, principal) ☐
g. Brother/sister ☐

28. Which of these sources are most important? (CIRCLE BOX(ES) OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE(S) OF INFORMATION)

29. If you were to grade the overall usefulness of the teachers, counselors, and other staff at your high school in helping you plan your courses and your career and college plans, what letter grade would you give them? (MARK ONE)

A+ ☐	B+ ☐	C+ ☐	D+ ☐
A ☐	B ☐	C ☐	D ☐
A- ☐	B- ☐	C- ☐	D- ☐

F/Fail ☐
Don't know ☐

30. Do you plan to go to a college or university (including community college) at some time in the future? (MARK ONE)

Yes, right after high school ☐
Yes, after working for a few years ☐
Don't know ☐
No ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 32**

31. Please write down the name and location (city) of the college or university you are <u>most likely</u> to attend and the field of study you are <u>most likely</u> to follow.

_____ _____
NAME (PLEASE PRINT) CITY

_____ or Don't Know ☐
FIELD OF STUDY

32. Write the name of the job or occupation that you expect or plan to have when you are 30 years old. Even if you are not at all sure, write in your best guess.

_____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Which of the categories below comes closest to describing that job? (MARK ONE)

CLERICAL such as bank teller, bookkeeper, secretary, typist, mail carrier, ticket agent ..... ☐
CRAFTSMAN such as baker, auto mechanic, machinist, painter, plumber, machine repairer, carpenter ..... ☐
FARMER, FARM MANAGER ..... ☐
HOMEMAKER/HOUSEWIFE ..... ☐
LABORER such as construction worker, car washer, sanitary worker ..... ☐
MANAGER, ADMINISTRATOR such as sales manager, office manager, school principal, restaurant manager, government official ..... ☐
MILITARY such as career officer, enlisted person in the Armed Forces ..... ☐
OPERATIVE such as meat cutter, assembler, machine operator, welder, taxicab, bus, or truck driver ..... ☐
PROFESSIONAL such as accountant, artist, nurse, engineer, librarian, writer, social worker, actor, athlete, politician ..... ☐
PROPRIETOR OR OWNER of a small business, contractor, restaurant owner ..... ☐
PROTECTIVE SERVICE such as police officer, guard, sheriff, fire fighter ..... ☐
SALES such as salesperson, advertising or insurance agent, real estate broker ..... ☐
SCHOOL TEACHER ..... ☐
SERVICE such as barber, beautician, practical nurse, child care worker, janitor, waiter ..... ☐
TECHNICAL such as draftsman, medical or dental technician, computer programmer ..... ☐
NOT WORKING ..... ☐

Background information...

33. Sex

Male ..... ☐
Female ..... ☐

34. Age (MARK ONE)

15 or younger ..... ☐
16 ..... ☐
17 ..... ☐
18 or older ..... ☐

35. Do you have any of the following conditions that limit your ability to do schoolwork or job activities? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Specific learning disability .... ☐
b. Visual handicap ..... ☐
c. Hard of hearing ..... ☐
d Deafness ..... ☐
e. Speech disability ..... ☐
f. Orthopedic handicap ..... ☐
g. Other health condition ..... ☐

36. What is your race? (MARK ONE)

African American ..... ☐
Caucasian (white) ..... ☐
Latino ..... ☐
Mixed racial background ..... ☐
Other ..... ☐

37. What suggestions do you have for your high school that would improve the process of how students decide what courses to take? What suggestions do you have about helping with career planning?

You have completed the survey. ***Thank you***. Please check over the survey to make sure you have answered all the questions and then turn it in to the monitor.

Parent Survey for Educational Development Plan Study

Sponsored by Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Dear Parent,

Thank you very much for volunteering to complete the enclosed survey, which is being done as part of a study of the use and effectiveness of educational development plans (EDPs) in high schools. Some schools refer to EDPs as 4-year or 6-year Course Planning Forms.

The purposes of the study are to find out how useful EDPs are for helping students make decisions about their classes in high school, career plans, and plans for further education or training after high school. Furthermore, we would like to know the extent to which parents/guardians are aware of, and involved in, the process of completing EDPS.

Your cooperation and participation will be very helpful in making EDPs more useful for students and parents in the future. All information that would permit identification of you will be held in strict confidence, will be used only by persons engaged in and for purposes of this survey, and will not be disclosed or released to others.

Please read the directions and complete the survey by **June 3, 2000**. Return the survey in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Upjohn Institute Project Staff
Contractor to OAISD

(Over)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

2. We are asking you these questions in order to gather information about your knowledge of Educational Development Plans (EDPs) and your participation in completing those plans.

3. Your responses will be merged with those of other respondents, and the answers you give will never be identified as yours.

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY.

It is important that you follow the directions for responding to each kind of question. These are:

- FOR QUESTIONS THAT ASK YOU TO WRITE IN INFORMATION, PLEASE PRINT THE INFORMATION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED.

- SOME QUESTIONS WILL ASK YOU TO MARK ONE RESPONSE. AN EXAMPLE FOLLOWS:

  What is the color of your eyes? (MARK ONE)

  Brown ..... ☐
  Blue ..... ☐
  Green ..... ■
  Another color ..... ☐

  If the color of your eyes were green, you would mark the square to the right of green.

- SOME QUESTIONS WILL ASK YOU TO MARK ALL RESPONSES THAT APPLY. AN EXAMPLE FOLLOWS:

  Last week, did you do any of the following? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

  See a play ..... ☐
  Go to a movie ..... ■
  Attend a sporting event ..... ■

If you went to a movie and attended a sporting event last week, you would mark the two squares as shown.

1. In what high school class(es) is(are) your child(ren) presently? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

Freshman ☐
Sophomore ☐
Junior ☐
Senior ☐

2. Which of the following best describes the grades that your child(ren) has (have) received so far in high school? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

Mostly A (a grade point average of near 4.0) ☐
About half A and half B (GPA around 3.5) ☐
Mostly B (GPA around 3.0) ☐
About half B and half C (GPA around 2.5) ☐
Mostly C (GPA around 2.0) ☐
About half C and half D (GPA around 1.5) ☐
Mostly D (GPA around 1.0) ☐
Mostly below D (GPA below 1.0) ☐

3. Some high schools are organizing courses and programs of study into broad categories called **career pathways or career majors**. Does the high school that your child(ren) attends have career majors or career pathways?

Yes ☐
No ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 5**
Don't know ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 5**

4. What pathway(s) is (are) your child(ren) in? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

Arts and communications (includes fine arts; performing arts; journalism; broadcasting) ☐
Business and business-related (includes marketing; retail sales; secretaries; business managers) ☐
Engineering, manufacturing, and industrial (includes architects; construction; engineers; pilots) ☐
Health services (includes pharmacists; nurses; physicians; dentists; veterinarians; medical assistants) ☐
Human services (includes teachers; lawyers; law enforcement; social workers; cosmetology) ☐
Agriscience and Natural Resources (includes environmentalists; farmers; landscape architects) ☐
Other (please name _____) ☐
Don't know ☐
None of the above ☐

5. Does the high school that your child(ren) attends have a document or form that your child(ren) uses to plan which courses to take in high school? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 17**
Don't know ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 17**

6. In which grade is this document first completed? (MARK ONE)

Before 8th grade ..... ☐
8th grade ..... ☐
9th grade ..... ☐
After 9th grade ..... ☐
Don't know ..... ☐

7. How often is this document reviewed and updated? (MARK ONE)

Never reviewed or updated ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 10**
Reviewed or updated at least once while in high school, but not as frequently as once per year ..... ☐
Once a year ..... ☐
More often than once a year ..... ☐
Don't know ..... ☐

8. Has your child(ren) reviewed or updated the document or form during this school year? (MARK ONE)

Yes ..... ☐
No ..... ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 10**

9. a. When was the most recent time (month/year) that your child(ren) reviewed or updated the document during this year?

_____ / _____ or Don't remember ..... ☐
(month) (year)

b. When did you learn about or see the document during this year?

_____ / _____ or Don't remember ..... ☐
(month) (year)

10. Does the high school that your child(ren) attends refer to this document as an EDP? (MARK ONE)

Yes . . . . . ☐
No . . . . . ☐
Don't know . . . . . ☐

11. Do you get involved in helping your child(ren) complete this document? (MARK ONE)

Yes, I/we are actively involved . . . . . ☐
Yes, I/we are aware of my/our child(ren)'s filling it out, but we don't actively help . . . . ☐
No . . . . . ☐

12. Did you meet with or telephone a guidance counselor or other staff person at your child's high school regarding your child's selection of courses? (MARK ONE)

Yes . . . . . ☐
No . . . . . ☐

13. Do you sign the document? (MARK ONE)

Yes . . . . . ☐
No . . . . . ☐
Don't remember . . . . . ☐

14. How would you rate the usefulness to you and your child of the course planning document (EDP) on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means extremely valuable and useful, and 1 means a meaningless bureaucratic piece of paper.

_____
(FILL IN A RATING FROM 1 TO 10)

15. How many copies of the document or plan are there that you know of? (MARK ONE)

One . . . . . ☐
Two . . . . . ☐
Three . . . . . ☐
More than three . . . . . ☐
Don't know . . . . . ☐

16. Where is this document, and copies, if any, filed and stored? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

In the high school
- in the guidance office ☐
- elsewhere in the school ☐

At home ☐
On a diskette ☐
On an internet site ☐
Some other place (please name _____) ☐
Not stored ☐
Don't know ☐

17. Does your child have an individualized educational plan (IEP)? (MARK ONE)

Yes ☐
No ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 20**
Don't know ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 20**

18. Is the IEP the same document or plan that you referred to in answering questions 5 through 16? (MARK ONE)

Yes ☐
No ☐

19. Does the IEP address career planning?

Yes ☐
No ☐

20. Is your child currently taking or has your child taken classes at Careerline Tech? (MARK ONE)

Yes ☐
No ☐ ⟹ **SKIP TO QUESTION 23**

21. Has your child(ren) completed a document or form different from the document or plan that was referred to in questions 5 through 16 that lists the courses he/she has taken or plans to take at Careerline? (MARK ONE)

Yes ☐
No ☐

22. Are the courses that he/she has taken or plans to take at Careerline listed on his/her course planning form at his/her high school?

Yes ☐
No ☐

Note: The next three questions deal with how your child(ren) generally decide to take specific classes in high school, whether or not he/she completed an EDP or course planning form.

23. When your child(ren) is trying to decide what classes to take in high school, which of the following sources of information do they rely on? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

Guidance counselor ☐
Teacher(s) ☐
High school course description handbook ☐
Parents/guardians ☐
Friends/acquaintances ☐
School staff member other than teacher, guidance counselor (for example, principal) ☐
Brother/sister ☐

24. Which of these sources are most important? (CIRCLE BOX(ES) OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE(S) OF INFORMATION)

25. If you were to grade the overall usefulness of the teachers, counselors, and other staff at your child's high school in helping plan courses, and giving advice on career and college plans, what letter grade would you give them? (MARK ONE)

A+ ☐	B+ ☐	C+ ☐	D+ ☐
A ☐	B ☐	C ☐	D ☐
A- ☐	B- ☐	C- ☐	D- ☐

F/Fail ☐
Don't know ☐

26. What suggestions do you have for your child's high school that would improve the process of how students decide what courses to take or to sign up for those courses?

You have completed the survey. ***Thank you***. Please check over the survey to make sure you have answered all the questions and then return it in the enclosed envelope.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

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